

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claim 9.

1-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method comprising polishing a composite material containing silica and silicon nitride with an acidic polishing slurry comprising:

(a) from about 0.1 to about 3.5 % ~~0.1 to about 6%~~, by weight, of a colloidal silica abrasive,

(b) from about 1 to about 6% ~~0.5 to about 10%~~, by weight, of a fluoride salt

~~wherein the colloidal silica abrasive is present in a quantity ranging from about 0.1 to about 3.5% by weight and the fluoride salt is present in a quantity of from about 1 to about 6%, by weight, and~~

(c) wherein the slurry has a pH ranging from about 2 to about 6.

11. (Currently Amended) The method ~~polishing slurry~~ according to Claim 10, wherein the fluoride salt is an ammonium salt.

12. (Currently Amended) The method ~~polishing slurry~~ according to Claim 10, wherein the fluoride salt is ammonium fluoride or ammonium hydrogen fluoride.

13. (Currently Amended) The method ~~polishing slurry~~ according to Claim 10, wherein the fluoride salt is ammonium hydrogen fluoride.

14. (Currently Amended) The method ~~polishing slurry~~ according to Claim 10, wherein the colloidal silica has a mean particle size of from about 10 nm to about 1 μ m.

15. (Currently Amended) The method ~~polishing slurry~~ according to Claim 14, wherein the colloidal silica has a mean particle size of from about 20 nm to about 100 nm.